



## ***Agent Orange: VA Eligibility for Benefits***

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/index.asp>

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### **Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange**

Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service may be eligible for a variety of VA benefits, including disability compensation for diseases associated with exposure. Your dependents and survivors also may be eligible for benefits. VA and federal law presumes that certain diseases are a result of exposure to these herbicides. This "presumptive policy" simplifies the process for receiving compensation for these diseases since VA foregoes the normal requirements of proving that an illness began during or was worsened by your military service. A Veteran who believes he or she has a disease caused by Agent Orange exposure that **is not** one of the conditions listed below must show an actual connection between the disease and herbicide exposure during military service.

### **Eligibility – Service in Vietnam or Korea**

VA presumes that Veterans were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides if they served:

- In Vietnam anytime between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975, including brief **visits ashore** or service aboard a ship that operated on the **inland waterways** of Vietnam
- In or near the Korean demilitarized zone anytime between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971

If you fall into either category listed above, you do not have to show that you were exposed to Agent Orange to be eligible for disability compensation for diseases VA presumes are associated with it. Check the list of U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships that operated in Vietnam to confirm whether your service aboard a ship allows VA to concede you were exposed to Agent Orange.

### **Eligibility – Service Outside of Vietnam or Korea**

Even if you did not serve in Vietnam or the Korean demilitarized zone during the specified time periods, you can still apply for disability compensation if you were exposed to an herbicide while in the military and believe it led to the onset of a disease. This includes:

- Veterans who served on or near the perimeters of military bases in Thailand during the Vietnam Era.
- Veterans who served where herbicides were tested and stored outside of Vietnam.
- Veterans who were crew members on C-123 planes flown after the Vietnam War.
- Veterans associated with Department of Defense (DoD) projects to test, dispose of, or store herbicides in the U.S.

If eligible, you must prove that you were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during your military service to be eligible for service-connection for disease VA presumes are related to Agent Orange exposure.

*Exception:* Blue Water Veterans with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma may be granted service-connection without showing inland waterway service or that they set foot in Vietnam. This is because VA also recognizes non-Hodgkin's lymphoma as related to service in Vietnam or the waters offshore of Vietnam during the Vietnam Era.

### **Veteran's Diseases Associated with Agent Orange**

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| • AL Amyloidosis           | • Parkinson's Disease     |
| • Chronic B-cell Leukemias | • Peripheral Neuropathy,  |
| • Chloracne                | Early-Onset               |
| • Diabetes Mellitus Type 2 | • Porphyria Cutanea Tarda |
| • Hodgkin's Disease        | • Prostate Cancer         |
| • Ischemic Heart Disease   | • Respiratory Cancers     |
| • Multiple Myeloma         | • Soft Tissue Sarcomas    |
| • Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma   |                           |

### **Children with Birth Defects**

VA has recognized that certain birth defects among Veterans' children are associated with Veteran's qualifying service in Vietnam or Korea. For more information: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/birth-defects/index.asp>



## *Message from Congressman Ron Barber*

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Vietnam Veterans and Family Members,

It is an honor to represent you and the 85,000 Veterans and family members of Southern Arizona who have sacrificed so much for our country. We all owe a debt of gratitude for your service.

As you know, more than 20 million gallons of the herbicide "Agent Orange" was sprayed to remove jungle foliage during the Vietnam War which had serious medical consequences to many of our service members that served during that time.

Since then, laws have been passed to ensure Vietnam Veterans and their dependents receive the medical benefits that they deserve. On the back of this message are the VA benefits eligibility provisions for those that have been exposed to Agent Orange. Additionally, other benefits are available to the children of Vietnam Veterans who have birth defects or illnesses due to the exposure suffered by their parent. More information can be found at this website: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/birth-defects/index.asp>.

The current law, the **Agent Orange Act of 1991** empowers the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to declare certain illnesses presumptive to exposure to Agent Orange and enabled Vietnam veterans to receive disability compensation for these related conditions. However, only Vietnam War Veterans, and their dependents, who served on the ground or inland waterways can receive VA benefits if they suffer from any of the diseases the United States government has linked to Agent Orange. Recent extensions have been made for this law.

Additionally, I cosponsored **H.R. 543, The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act**, which will provide the same VA benefits to Vietnam veterans that served along the territorial seas of Vietnam. This is an important bill because many of these "Blue Water" veterans are having the same effects that other veterans have due to Agent Orange that served during the same time.

Once again, it is my honor to represent you, your families and the other Veterans who have stepped forward to serve our nation. I am committed to keep the people I serve, like you, updated on my work in Congress that has a direct impact on their lives. Please contact me if I can be of service to you. If you are experiencing issues with a federal agency, my office may be able to help you resolve the problem. You can contact me at <http://barber.house.gov/> or call my office in Tucson at 520-881-3588 or in Sierra Vista at 520-459-3115 for more information.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Barber".

Ron Barber  
Member of Congress